



## Recycling – Is This the New Normal?







## SWANA's Mission

**SWANA is an organization of professionals committed to advancing from solid waste management to resource management through their shared emphasis on education, advocacy and research**

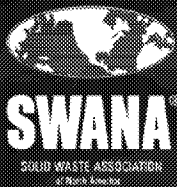
– SWANA Strategic Plan FY 2016-2020 (March 2015)



# China and Recycling







## China Restricts Imports

- Prohibits imports of mixed paper and post-consumer plastic – January 1, 2018
- Contamination standard of 0.5% effective March 1, 2018
- Tariffs imposed mid-2018
- Additional tariffs announced as part of ongoing trade war





## New Asian Markets

Other countries in Asia began receiving lots more paper/plastic from U.S. and other countries in wake of China's actions

- Vietnam
- Thailand
- Malaysia
- India
- Indonesia



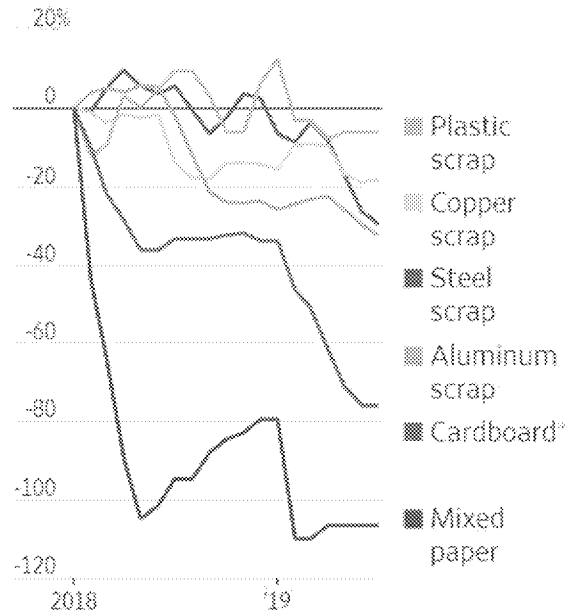
These nations started to impose restrictions as they were overrun by containers and plastic

- Several countries are returning “dirty recyclables”



# Prices Continue Declining

Recycled commodity prices, percentage change from January 2018



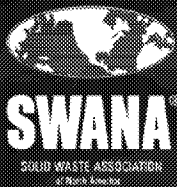




## Local Government Responses

- Many are renegotiating contracts
- Some scaled back materials accepted – plastic!
- A few eliminated curbside recycling
- A few increased fees for service (\$1-3/month)
- A handful have gone back to dual stream collection
- Most focus on reducing contamination





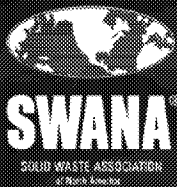
# Local Government Responses

## A TALE OF TWO CITIES

- Surprise, AZ – Suspending curbside collection until markets recover
- Tucson, AZ - Changing to every-other-week curbside collection to reduce costs
- SWANA's Applied Research Foundation (ARF) issued a report last week that recommended changing collection frequency as a way for local governments to respond to declining prices caused by National Sword.







## **Local Government Responses**

**The most common response has been efforts to reduce contamination, which increases operational costs and reduces the value of the material processed at the MRF**

**SWANA-reviewed data reveals many single-stream systems have 15-25% contamination rates**



# Contamination

- Hoses/Tanglers
- Food waste
- Batteries
- Bowling balls!
- Diapers
- Propane Tanks
- Textiles
- Styrofoam





# Plastic Bags at the MRF





# Contamination







# Contamination

## RECYCLE

PLASTICS  
ALUMINUM AND STEEL  
GLASS  
PAPER CARTONS  
PAPER  
CARDBOARD

**GOLDEN FLASHES RECYCLE**  
RUMPKLE

## LANDFILL

PLASTICS NOT RECYCLED & PLASTIC COMPOSTABLE CONTAINERS  
FLEX PLASTICS (soft plastics) WRAPPERS, PLASTIC BAGS  
STYROFOAM (expanded polystyrene)  
PAPER TOWELS, NAPKINS, FACIAL TISSUE  
FOOD, DIRTY FOOD CONTAINERS, WAX PAPER  
PAPER CUPS

**TRASH TAKEN TO LANDFILL  
MORE THAN 20 MILES FROM CAMPUS**  
RUMPKLE

### WHAT TO RECYCLE

PAPER

GLASS (bottles & jars)

CARTONS

PLASTIC (bottles & jugs)

METALS

Learn what to recycle in Rumpke's program.

DISCOVER MORE



# Contamination

## RECYCLING

**✓ EMPTY** **✓ CLEAN** **✓ UNBAGGED**

### PAPER

- Empty cartons - 34oz liquids
- Plastic boxes
- Corrugated cardboard paper in paper bag or box

### PLASTIC

- Empty bottles, jugs, jars and tubs
- 500 food or liquids
- Plastic tubs and cups

### METAL & GLASS

- Empty cans, bottles and jars
- 500 food or liquids
- Clean tin
- Plastic tubs and cups
- 500 food
- 500 liquids
- 500 food
- 500 liquids

**WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT!**

Source: American Public Garbage Association

## Recycling

### Cans & Bottles

### Empty Cups

### Clean Plastic Containers & Large Lids

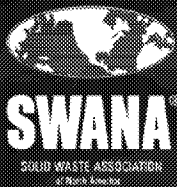
### Paper & Empty Cartons

**ITEMS MUST BE EMPTY AND CLEAN**

For more information call 425.451.0220 or visit [recyclingdonorstop.com/factall](http://recyclingdonorstop.com/factall)

Recycling Donorstop



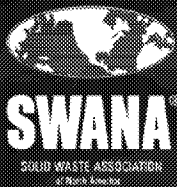


## Clean It Up at the Curb



- Restrict list of what is acceptable to what can be recycled
- More education
- More enforcement
- Less wishful recycling



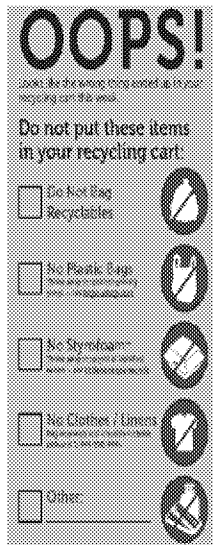


# Contamination Declining

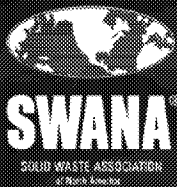
**Contamination rates are declining in communities that are focusing educational or enforcement resources to residents**

- District of Columbia DPW - 24% to 18%
- San Antonio - 29% to 21%
- Lynn, Mass rejection rate from 31% to 10%
- WM reports national contamination rate at their MRFs has declined from 24% to 19%
- Mass DEP Recycling IQ Kit reduced cart rejections in communities by 30 – 80%

**Rumpke/Fairfield & Centerville – 22 to 12%, 19 to 11%**







# Contamination

**We still have work to do on contamination...**

SCENE & HEARD

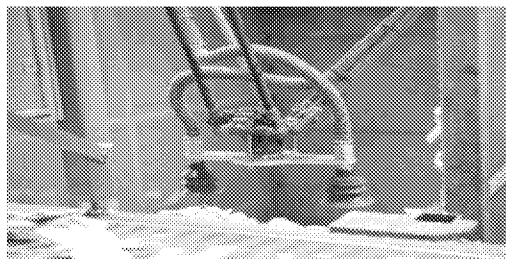
**Republic Services Would Appreciate it if You'd  
Stop Putting Live Ammo and Dead Animals in the  
Recycling**

Posted By Sam Allard on Thu, May 23, 2019 at 10:54 am



## Recycling Facilities Need to be Updated

- **Upgrades to equipment**
  - Optical sorters, robots, AI, ballistic separators
- **More automation/fewer people**
- **More flexibility to adapt to changing material streams**
- **“MRF of the Future”**







# Chemical Recycling

**Increased interest in plastic-to-fuel and polymer level recycling. A recent Closed Loop Fund report identified 60 chemical recycling solutions**

- **Dow/EnergyBag is most visible**
- **Marine Litter is major catalyst for investment by large companies**







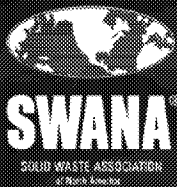
## Increasingly Optimistic

### **1. U.S. & Chinese companies are investing in domestic processing capacity in the U.S.**

- 20+ plants coming on-line in late 2019-2021 (mostly paper)
- 3.5M tons OCC/mixed paper & 1M tons pulp



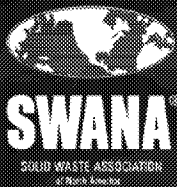




## **Increasingly Optimistic**

- 2. MRFs are making investments**
- 3. Brands setting new recycled content goals**
- 4. Renewed focus on contamination at all levels**
  - contamination rates are declining
- 5. Increased cooperation and collaboration among recycling stakeholders**
- 6. Basel Convention amendment – U.S. may not be able to export recovered plastic to developing countries starting 2021**
  - OECD meeting this week in Paris
- 7. US EPA developing a national recycling Framework**





# EPA Recycling Pledge



## AMERICA RECYCLES DAY 2018 PLEDGE

In recognition of this America Recycles Day, November 15, 2018, we, the undersigned, pledge to work together to build on our existing efforts to address the challenges facing our nation's recycling system and identify solutions that create a more resilient materials economy and protect the environment. Our signatures indicate the interest and willingness of our organizations to participate in an ongoing dialogue over the next year to identify specific actions that we can take collectively and within our respective organizations to improve the nation's recycling system.

[www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov)

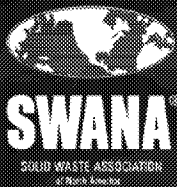




## EPA Recycling Workgroups

- **Education and Outreach**
  - Develop consistent messages for key recycling issues
- **Improve Materials Mgmt Infrastructure**
  - Create a digital library of info/best practices/funding
- **Strengthen Secondary Materials Markets**
  - Explore regional and local market development
- **Enhance Measurement**
  - Compile state/local metrics & measures; data gaps
  - Is weight the best metric?

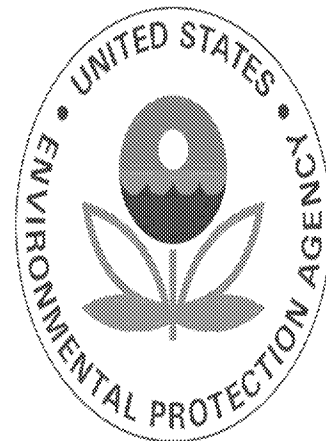




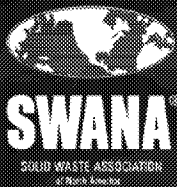
## **EPA - Recycling**

**EPA will be releasing the “Recycling Framework” on America Recycles Day (ARD) on Nov 15, 2019, during its ARD Summit**

**SWANA is helping EPA plan the ARD 2019 events and develop The Framework**







## EPA - Recycling

**SWANA, its chapters and members are organizing recycling-related events the week of November 11-15**

- **Nov 11** - KAB Recycling Heroes (TX)
- **Nov 12** - 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Waste Wise
- **Nov 13** - ISRI Congressional briefing
- **Nov 14** - Innovations Fair in Washington
- **Nov 15** - EPA ARD Summit





## **EPA - Recycling**

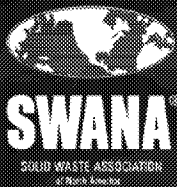
**Purpose of November 11-15 activities will be to counter the “recycling crisis” narrative**

- Highlight innovations/technology**
- Highlight progress on contamination**
- Emphasize economic and environmental benefits**

**SWANA Chapters planning state and local events including: tours, special waste drop-off, press releases, and education campaigns**

**-partner with OAR and OALPRP?**





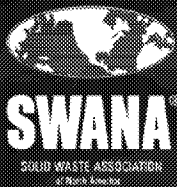
## Congress

**Congress is interested in recycling and hearings may take place in the Fall**

**RECOVER Act – proposal to create federal funding for states to distribute for recycling education, equipment upgrades, and growing domestic markets (SWANA is key stakeholder)**







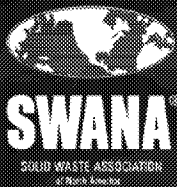
## Congress

**Some Democrats believe the RECOVER Act isn't aggressive enough and want to do more.**

- **Udall/Lowenthal – “Plastic Crisis” Bill Principles**

- Product Stewardship
- National Bottle Bill
- National Bag Fee
- Ban on Styrofoam
- New labeling requirements
- Collection targets for single use plastic bottles
- Recycled content requirements



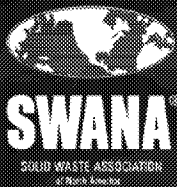


## Congress

### Save Our Seas 2.0

- **Bipartisan effort to strengthen domestic infrastructure and prevent marine debris**
- **Directs EPA to develop strategy for material management and residential recycling infrastructure**
- **Creates block grant program for states to support municipal recycling programs (states must contribute 20%)**
- **Creates infrastructure grant program (\$50M/year)**
- **Directs EPA to perform studies re plastics**





# WASTECON

## SWANA

# WASTECON 2019

## Phoenix, Arizona

## October 21 – 24, 2019





**SWANA***palooza*

**March 23–26, 2020**  
**The Westin Peachtree Plaza**  
**Atlanta, Georgia**

[SWANApalooza.org](http://SWANApalooza.org)  
[#SWANApalooza](https://twitter.com/SWANApalooza)







**Thank you!**

**Questions?**

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